(b) If so, the names of those journalists ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI DALBIR SINGH) : (a) and (b) 'Housing' is a Stale subject and all Slatts/UTs are free to formulate ana implement al l social housing schemes keeeping in view their local needs and plan priorities. The Central Govt, has therefore no information in this regard.

**Production of steel in the Country**

3243. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the MINISTER of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the cost of production of st[p]el in India is the highest amongst the major steel producing countries ;

(b) if so, the reasons for the same; and

(c) the details of the steps being taken or proposed to reduce the cost ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR) : (a) and (b) As no authentic information on the cost of production of steel in other countries is available, it is not possible to compare the cost of production in those countries with that in India.

(c) Efforts to contain cost of production include ;

(i) increasing the utiliza tion of installed capacity J

(ii) improving productivity j

(iii) energy conservation rneasures ;

(iv) improving maintenance \

(v) timely modernization and balancing investments.

**Assistance for developmentofbackward areas in Maharashtra**

3244. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

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(a) whether Government of Maharashlra have requested fcr assistance for the development of backward areas of Gsdchircli district and selected areas of Chandrapur district which are mainly inhabited by Scheduled Tribes and Primitive tribes; and

(b) if so, what action Government propose to take in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPA1): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, the State Government has proposed an investment of Rs. 195 34 crores phased over a period of four years, under the on going schemes in different sector of development such as Roads Rural Electrification, Public Health, Agriculture and Irrigation etc. in the backward areas of Gadchiroli district and parts of Chandrapur district. The State Government has been advised that they should approach **the** planning Commission for enhanced allocation of funds during Eighth Plan under these[1] sectors in view of the increased investments specially pioposedi fcr these areas.